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## Local News

Home news Local News Art exhibit part of healing process



### Art exhibit part of healing process

Posted By By Don Crosby

Updated 12 mins ago

A cross-cultural group plans events, starting with an exhibit to help heal the legacy of residential schools.

Restoring the Circle is a group of community members representing Aboriginal people and churches, as well as health-care professionals, educators, the business community, farmers and service agencies.

It was formed last May in response to the truth and reconciliation process announced by the federal government, with the intention of bringing clarity to local communities about the impacts of the Indian residential schools on both First Nations and non-native communities.

"There are two First Nations right here in Bruce County and the intergenerational effects of the residential school experience are gambling, addictions and they still continue today," Susan Shank, chair of the Restoring the Circle committee and member of the Chippewas of Saugeen, told members of Bruce County council recently. "Non-native people see First Nations people drinking and gambling and don't understand why."

"It's not just for aboriginal people, because the wounds from the way aboriginal people were treated go very deep and affect all of us, whether we know that or not, so we need to work towards restoring the circle in a big way to include healing for non aboriginal people," said Maurice Brubacher, a member of the committee.

Two community events are planned for this year. The Tom Thomson Art Gallery is presenting "Where are the Children: Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools", an exhibit first presented in 2002 at the National Archives in Ottawa.

The exhibit was produced by the Legacy of Hope Foundation and is a collection of images of aboriginal children who attended residential schools. It will be on display until March 1. The opening reception takes place Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. at the gallery. The exhibit was brought to Owen Sound by the Restoring the Circle committee.

A primary objective of the foundation is to promote awareness among the Canadian public about residential schools and try to help them to understand the ripple effect those schools had on Aboriginal life.

"But equally important we want to bring about reconciliation between generations of Aboriginal people and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people," Shank said.

A three-day conference is being organized in late September to look at how the past experiences of racism, assumptions and biases, negative stereotypes and cultural beliefs affect people's present health and well-being, and how those involved can work together.

Shank told council that for the next six months organizations can book an interactive training workshop to support the truth and reconciliation process in the community. The workshops will provide information on the legacy of the residential school system and the truth and reconciliation process, tools to understand and address racism and build relationships, along with strategies to acknowledge the past and how to move forward.

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"It's not just the wounds of the native population impacted on the non-native population, but the non-native population has shut out the gifts and knowledge and experiences of the First Nations people in our own community. Even the history of our area we don't know about it from the Aboriginal perspective and that is a huge loss to us," said Colleen Purdon, a member of the restoring the circle committee.

"Racial discrimination policies have not benefited the larger community at all. In fact we are poorer and have created all kinds of conflicts that are not helping anybody . . . there's a great deal of loss and I think there are things we can do to move forward in a different way."

Long-term plans include establishing a healing lodge in the area with a memorial garden.



Tyler Ramage arranges photos from the exhibit "Where Are The Children: Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools" at the Tom Thomson Gallery.

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"We don't have a location for it yet . . . we'd like it to be someplace in Bruce Grey and in a natural setting. It would include a

memorial garden for the children who died while at residential school," said Brubacher.

Brubacher said he saw a documentary recently that claimed as many as half of the children sent to residential schools died while attending the schools.

He said the lodge would offer healing programs for survivors and their families and ways to bring together people from all cultures.

"It will provide a place where their families can pray and the green growing things can represent transformation of pain to new life," Brubacher said.

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The Art of Bruce Steinhöf

The Art of Bruce Steinhöf

Walk Like an Egyptian exhibit at Grey Roots

**Jan. 28, 2009**

Sauble Sandpipers SOLO 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 A.M.

Where are the Children?

**Jan. 30, 2009**

Roller Night in Kemble Fridays 7-10pm

